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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/603,727	06/23/2000	Lee W. Mueller	SST/1070	1985
498	7590		EXAMINER	
JAMES R. CYPHER			WENDELL, MARK R	
405 14TH STREET				
SUITE 1607			ART UNIT	
OAKLAND, CA 94612			PAPER NUMBER	
			3635	
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/603,727

Applicant(s)

MUELLER, LEE W.

Examiner

MARK R. WENDELL

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 March 2007.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 4, 6, 10-14 and 22-36 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) 33-36 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) 1, 4, 6, 10-14, 26 and 29 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) 22-28 and 30-32 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 23 June 2000 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
- Paper No(s)/Mail Date 20070326
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
- Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Double Patenting

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Claims 1 and 33 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 1 of U.S. Patent No. 5706626. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because each claim a pre-assembled apparatus for reducing the tendency of upper portions of walls to move with respect to a foundation as a results of lateral forces with two vertically extending posts, a horizontal upper member, one or more brace members, and two attachment points.

Claim 4 is rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 4 of U.S. Patent No. 5706626. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because each claim the apparatus adapted to reduce the tendency of upper portions of walls to move with respect to a foundation with respect to an uplift force.

Claim 6 is rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 6 of U.S. Patent No. 5706626. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because each claim the apparatus wherein the two vertical posts are roughly 7-8' in height and less

than 3 feet in width with the apparatus reducing the motion of the upper plate by the same amount.

Claim 10 is rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 9 of U.S. Patent No. 5706626. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because each claims the apparatus with two vertically extending posts, at least one panel member, two holdown bolts, and two attachment points. The only difference is that the instant application has the apparatus within a building inserted into a wall, which is an obvious variation of claim 9 of the US patent.

Claim 11 is rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 10 of U.S. Patent No. 5706626. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because each claims the apparatus having an upper horizontal member interconnecting the vertical posts and a lower horizontal member.

Claim 12 is rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 11 of U.S. Patent No. 5706626. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because each claims one or more panel members attached to the vertical posts.

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Claim 13 is rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 12 of U.S. Patent No. 5706626. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because each claims the two attachment points are comprised of two brackets connected to the holdown bolts.

Claim 14 is rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 13 of U.S. Patent No. 5706626. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because each claim shear bolts mounted in the foundation with the lower horizontal member attached to the shear bolts.

Claims 26 and 29 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 14 of U.S. Patent No. 5706626. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because each claim a method of building a wall including providing a foundation, mounting two or more studs, positioning an upper plate, and attaching the lower and upper portions of the shear reduction panel.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

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A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1 and 4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Lucas (US 3822521). Regarding claims 1 and 4, Lucas illustrates in Figures 3 and 5 an apparatus for reducing the tendency for reducing the tendency of upper portions of walls to move with respect to a foundation as a result of lateral forces with:

- Two vertically extending posts (13, 14) having an upper and lower end and defining a front and back side, wherein the vertically extending posts are positioned in a pre-selected spaced relationship;
- A horizontal upper member (15) connected to the upper ends of the posts;
- One or more brace members (12) that connect the posts; and
- Two attachment points (21) respectively connected to the lower ends of the two posts and are configured to be attached to an anchor point within the foundation (20).

The examiner notes that it has been held that the recitation that an element is “adapted to” or “configured to” perform a function is not a positive limitation but only requires the ability to so perform. It does not constitute a limitation in any patentable sense (In re Hutchison, 69 USPQ 138).

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 22-28 and 30-32 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 33-36 are allowed.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: The prior art of record found by the examiner fails to teach or suggest the force reduction apparatus in combination with an actual wall within a building. The prior art of record either does not teach all of the limitations of the apparatus, such as the upper and lower horizontal members or the holddown bolts, or teaches the actual wall being the force reduction apparatus.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to MARK R. WENDELL whose telephone number is

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(571)270-3245. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri, 7:30AM-5PM, Alt. Fri off, EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Richard Chilcot can be reached on (571) 272-6777. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Richard E. Chilcot/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art
Unit 3635

/M. R. W./
Examiner, Art Unit 3635
February 25, 2008